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PARNASSUS

Autumn '77



# ***PARNASSUS***

**LITERARY MAGAZINE**

**OF**

**NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

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# ***PARNASSUS***

**LITERARY MAGAZINE**

**OF**

**NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

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apocynaceae



## **DREAMERS**

Saw Kahlil Gibran speeding down the road in a 1978 Grand Prix  
it simply shorted my sonar  
    this guy was so sure and so pure  
        so beautifully caring  
            so strong and so daring  
                so what?  
    so his dreams got smacked with reality  
Living in yesterday's tomorrows he just couldn't face,  
    the disgrace,  
        of being poor and living in these United States.  
He got a job selling heroin.

**Brian Pacheco**



## American Blues

Woodstock was weally [B. Walters] many tunes ago  
don't ya know, United States of America, it's too damn bad  
I wanna hear Hendric and munch on yesterday's hopes and dreams  
don't wanna see plastic people doin' robot dances

### DISCO YUCKS

THEY'RE ALL DOING THE SAME DANCES [really bogus]  
so put some Dylan on that electrophonic gismo  
listen to his words  
interpret them as you may  
personally  
I know he's peddling some truth somewhere  
Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young - you'll never grow old.

### The Three Stooges

moe, larry, curly  
moe, larry, shemp  
moe, larry, joe  
thanks for laughter and fun  
\*you stooges must be raising hell up there\*.

### Being Sure

What is being sure all about?  
I'm really not sure.  
Sure you're not.

### THE BOOMER

Big George is in love with baseball, food, and talking.  
he's The Boomer  
the only time I don't dig The Boomer  
is  
when he strikes out chasing the low outside pitch  
lay off that damn pitch, Boomer

### Tough Earl

little earl grew to be so tough  
when he was small always searchin' for love  
got so little  
just wasn't enough  
to help him grow, as a human being  
who can you blame  
earl's in the hit-man's hall of fame

### Sneaky Pete

"When he get drunk he say what he want to." Sneaky Pete.  
maybe, maybe not

**Brian Pacheco**

## BALLET OF THE SUN

Of new she comes,  
Speaks to me, as very few do,  
Lithe and beautiful, a smile and glow,  
bright and warm like the sun's  
eternal rays,  
Scarlet fire hair,  
And eyes that burn deep,  
Touching upon your very soul . . .

Dedicated to L.W.

Paul Sanborn





**your occasional kisses feed my fantasies**

**K. Steele**

## IGNORANCE

I am a stupid farmer:  
Endlessly I pull the same weeds  
To prepare this hopeless soil  
For these same sterile seeds.

Each year I plant these same dreams  
And water them with tired desires.  
And each year faithfully,  
My crops refuse to rise.

I have grown starved and poor;  
And yet I cannot leave this field  
That breaks my back  
And will not yield.

I am a stubborn man  
Who sighs the same old sigh;  
Who stands alone at summer's end  
To watch his harvest die.

Sarah Anne Browne

## THE DEATH OF SARAH

The light left her eyes this morning.  
It came upon the window sill with dawn;  
But with the black of night  
The life in her had gone.

Alec buried her in the field  
And held the tears from his cheeks.  
How helplessly he'd let her die  
When she grew pale and weak.

Last night she held my hand so tight,  
She whispered soft and deep,  
"If I must die, if I must leave  
And face eternal sleep:

Then place my bones in the meadow  
With the hillside very near -  
The whipporwill and all her friends  
My mute soul might hear.

Place me near the crooked creek -  
My soul can walk that far;  
And let no trees shut out the sight  
Of each and every star."

Alec stays close to the soil;  
He knows as well as I  
That's where she lives, that's where she dwells.  
Her soul could never die.

Sarah Anne Browne





## LITTLE GIRL

Little Girl in pigtails and faded dungarees,  
Your dimples smudged with jelly and patches on your knees,  
Your hands are black: Your feet are wet: The door is left ajar,  
You giggle as you tell me how you stuck your foot in tar,  
You kiss your baby sister, take an apple and a pear,  
Then you rush back to the yard, shouting, "Love you, Ma!"

Little girl in pigtails and faded dungarees,  
Your dimples smudged with jelly and patches on your knees,  
I watch you run in circles: I see you climb a tree,  
You look just like another girl who used to be as free,  
You stop to catch a falling leaf, then toss it in the air,  
You're off again to skip and jump - all challengers beware!

Little girl in pigtails and faded dungarees,  
Your dimples smudged with jelly and patches on your knees,  
Through you I can remember my childhood's afternoons,  
The ice cream man, the roller skates, and all those silly tunes,  
So when I wash your party dress or kiss a banged-up knee,  
I often smile in memory - that other girl was me.

Kathy Brown



## WORDS OF WASTE OR A FILTHY DREAM

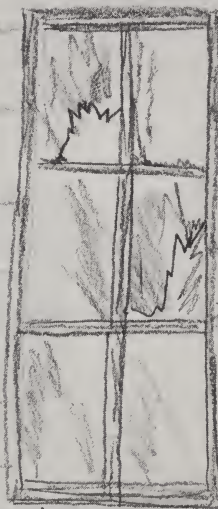
I wish to be a garbage man  
No matter how filthy it may seem;  
I want to live in a trash can.  
Just having a garbage truck  
Or inhaling those organic wastes;  
What sweet-stinking tastes!  
My freedom will be at the dump.  
What excitement,  
My heart just skipped a jump!  
What a thrill, all that swill!  
Just think I may become recyclable.  
I'd have rats, pigs, and a pet skunk.  
We'd eat junk for lunch.  
My rights to refuse will be at my disposal;  
For my dreams are free.  
My future motto will be:  
"Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Debris."

Cilla

AND DOWN  
NEXT RIGHT LEFT!

IT  
THE  
WORLD IS  
FLAT

BY THE EDITORS



"SS 20x  
+14x  
54 WILL!!"

"LIFE LIBORX AND  
THE PRUIT  
OF DEBIS!"

"GUY 76"

"SHUNKY 77"

## THE SKIRT NOT CHOSEN

Two skirts hung in my closet there.  
I knowing I could not wear twain  
Stood and thought and tried to be fair  
As to which skirt I should wear.  
I scrutinized the one that was plain.

I looked at the other, so bright.  
And put it next to the one before.  
Perhaps the fabric is much too light  
To adorn myself on this cold night.  
I chose the first which I did adore.

It was made of wool which is so warm  
Even on the coldest nights. I'm pleased  
I have it as I walk from the dorm  
And feel the cold air as it swarms  
Around my body that it could freeze.

On these winter nights when I think back  
Of all those times I could have caught cold  
If I had not had that skirt of black  
But taken the bright one from the rack,  
I might not relay this tale told.

Nancy Gill



Loose gray curls  
Seeking a neck  
Beneath a heavy collar

A pink dress  
A long overcoat  
One button

A shaky hand  
Wrinkled nylons  
Groping legs

A brown wooden fence

A squared-off sidewalk  
Small strides  
Against a long distance

Liberato Francisco





There is too much  
to capture  
The sight,  
the push, the pull  
the curling over and backward motion,  
the flexibility  
of this clear blue-green mirror  
that explodes  
to add touches of white -  
Foamy pure white fingers of bubbles  
cling and pull onto the sand  
and pop, individually, creating  
the sound -  
the never forgotten echo  
that carries the tune of each crash -  
Millions of children  
with fingers to their mouths  
asking for silence.

Kathy Kenny

## PASSOVER

All that summer  
    I streamed across the ocean  
Telegrams to you.  
I may as well have screamed  
    into a conch shell;  
Or floated my folded heart  
    in a bottle searching for your hands.

Your hands,  
    and the coin edged ring  
That matches mine  
    and mine yours,  
Rings we so delicately exchanged once  
Beneath a canope  
    of Rabbis, friends, and family.

I remember that April Passover  
At Aunt Joy's house;  
And my anxious cousins  
    as I stood trembling  
When asked to introduce  
    my husband for the first time.

I stuttered  
    and everyone laughed.  
The purple grape wine in crystal glasses.  
My white dress  
    and the white-draped tables:  
Your navy blue jacket  
    belted in back.

Thick Chick-a-bum explaining reduntantly  
    for the children:  
    "They passed over."  
Uncle Russel starting to fidget  
    and clear his throat,  
Yarmulkas sliding and being pushed back  
    in place.

Dark green trees and landscaped gardens luxuriate  
    outside, and inside  
Eyelet lace borders the table linen  
    and obscure relatives.  
Toast the young couple. "Mazeltov"  
    "Leichaim!"

Shyly did I retreat into your eyes  
your eyes.  
Comforting blue jewels in which  
I frequently get lost  
there finding home.

Summer, and endlessly, it seems;  
I sent you letters  
on the paper of my skin.  
Tatoos of you rainbow in my mind.

I felt pasted  
to my wicker chair  
with the calico cushions.  
And that God-forsaken heat  
The fog  
which ardently and uninvited  
Curled about me  
like a homeless dog.

I kept writing  
even so.  
But Italy must have built walls  
above my notes;  
My throat parched  
and repeating to no avail  
like a broken record.

Feeling passed-over  
drinking too much wine  
from France.

Winter became a resignation  
People caroling Christmas carols.  
It was then that they came,  
and they kept coming -  
in the comfort of cold December,  
Returned letters  
that never found you.  
Ballets of ballads  
swung their skirts about.  
I looked for the singer in me.  
But no notes came  
from my throat.

Sarah Anne Browne

## BAR TO BARS

Bar to bars,  
Don't fence me in.  
Looking for a new face  
that can smile at me,  
In goodness and love.  
Without ideas of;  
What was,  
Or habits irking bad of mine.  
Hands holding  
in  
innocence of a  
First meeting.

R. E. Bissonnette

## EN GARDE

I lifted my foil  
Let it point to  
The sky.  
Slowly, I lowered it  
Until it stopped to greet  
My opponent's eyes.  
He looked at me,  
I at him.  
    I advanced  
    He backed away  
    I lunged  
My arm and foil shot straight ahead;  
The tip bent as it met its destiny.  
He  
Became  
Enraged,  
    Came toward me.  
    I retreated  
And flinched as his foil caught my side.  
    I returned his lunge  
    He came at me --  
    Quickly;  
        I  
        Spun  
    Away,  
        Lunged again, and  
    Felt his foil upon me.  
Recovering, I saw his  
    Foil coming;  
    I brushed it away with mine.  
"Stop!"  
We turned to face our instructor.  
"You were sloppy, terrible."  
Off we went  
    With broken pride  
    To practice until  
    We were perfect.

Nancy Gill

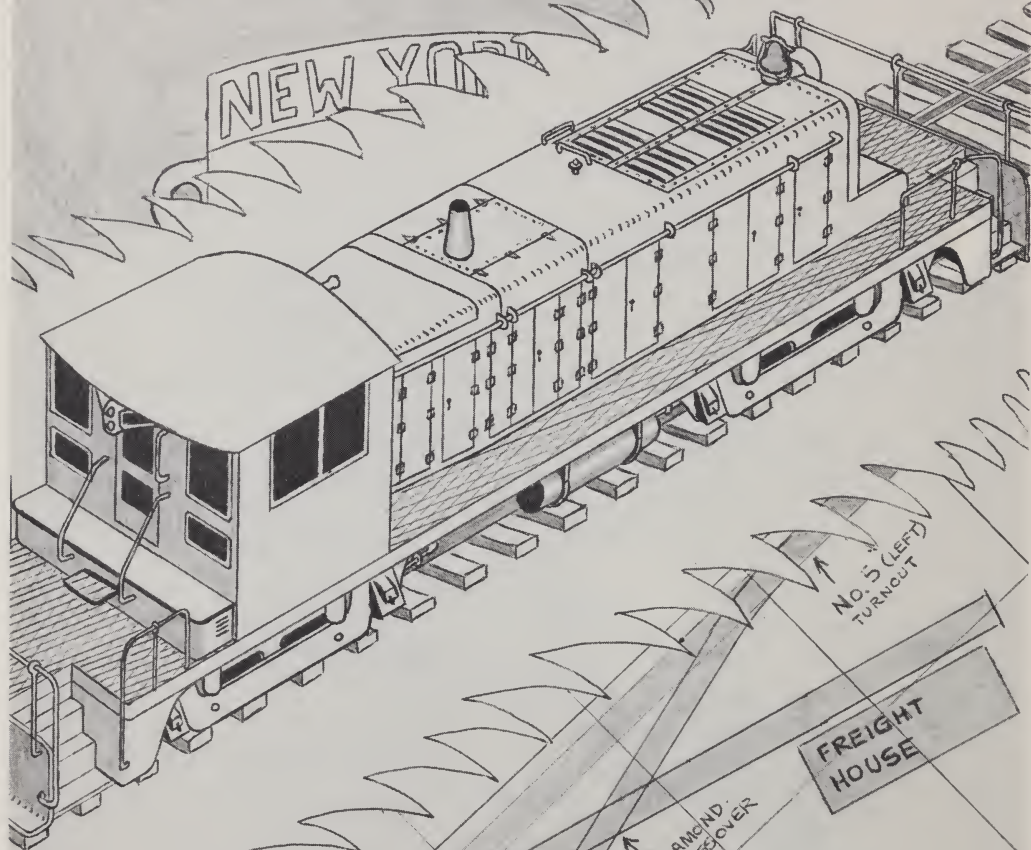


BOSTON AND MAINE

146

RAIL ROAD

NEW YORK



FREIGHT  
HOUSE

NO. 5 (LEFT)  
TURNOUT

DIAMOND  
CROSSOVER

NO. 4 (RIGHT)

NO. 5 (RIGHT)

27% GRADE

(CODE 100 RAIL)

MAINLINE

GO TO RAIL

Robert Cummings

## THE MODEL RAILROADER: MISUNDERSTOOD HOBBYIST

by Robert Pomerleau

“Aren’t you a bit ‘old’ to be playing with trains?” This is a question that should **never** be posed to a model railroader. There are three cogent reasons for avoiding this query. First, he has been asked this question countless times before, which probably accounts for his nervous tic. Second, he may conclude that the inquirer is either uncouth or dumb . . . or both. Third, if he is cornered, he may become uncontrollably violent. There is at least one well-documented case in which a railfan spat on the shoes of his tormentor when confronted with “THE QUESTION.”

Armed with this knowledge, we are now properly prepared to investigate this much-maligned hobbyist. Fortunately, we have an opportunity to converse with Mr. Farnsworth Doubleslip, a world-renowned choo-choo expert and former B & M baggage clerk.

“Excuse us, Farnie. We would like to ask a few questions about your hobby.”

“Sure. Fire away.” (This is model railroad jargon for, “You are welcome to ask any questions you wish.”)

“To begin with, while most people think of them as members of **one** hobby, do you think it would be more accurate to describe model railroaders as a group of distantly-related hobbyists?”

“Yes, I suppose . . . ”

“There is, for instance, the ‘Shutterbug.’ A strange creature, he is easily identified by the leathery pouches that hang from his shoulders. Spasmodically nocturnal, he may be seen in and around freight yards and on any foot or auto-bridges that span railroad tracks. He occasionally visits club layouts (miniature empires that require more than one person to operate) and the homes of fellow model railroaders to take photos. The ‘Shutterbug’ fills his ‘hive’ with scrapbooks and poster-size blow-ups of steam engines. Am I right?”

“Right!”



"More common are the 'Pack Rats' who horde but do not build train kits. They can usually be found scurrying around hobby shops or train conventions exchanging stacks of green and white paper for small boxes of various colors and shapes. A mature 'Pack Rat' could probably open his own model train store, do you agree?"

"Oh, yes. He . . ."

"Other types include the 'Draftsman,' the 'Craftsman,' and the 'Horn-Rimmed Bookworm.' The three are similar in that they never build layouts of their own. After spending the winter in hibernation, the 'Draftsman' emerges from his 'nest' in spring with a pencil on each ear and a bundle of blueprints under his 'wing.' His life is devoted to designing the **ultimate** track plan. The 'Craftsman' has devoted **his** life to winning model-building contests. He will spend months constructing, painting, and detailing an old factory or locomotive in miniature. He rarely leaves his workshop, but his creations may occasionally be glimpsed in the pages of a model railroading publication when his labors have resulted in a trophy. The 'Horn-rimmed Bookworm' is the only predator in the group. Despite his docile appearance, he reads voraciously and spends the balance of his time examining and measuring the work of others, in search of the inaccuracies that are an inevitable part of working in small scale."

"Speaking of scale . . ."

"Yes. We should discuss the fact that model railroaders work in a wide variety of scales. The smallest is Z-scale (an entire layout fits comfortably in the pencil drawer of an office desk). Intermediate scales fill areas ranging in size from a two-foot-wide shelf along a hobby room wall to a large cellar. The largest layouts, by far, are built by the 'Live Steamers,' so named because their locomotives are powered by coal and water 'just like the real ones.' A live steam loco measures up to ten feet long and is capable of towing the engineer and a half-dozen 'passengers' on a steel ribbon that may wrap around several acres of meadowland."

"Those who actually build model railroading empires, large or small, are known as 'Basic Choo-Choo Nuts.' They are actually mongrels, because they combine some of the traits of the other breeds with a modicum of skill in carpentry, electricity, and art. Now let me see . . . have I left anything out?"

"I doubt it!"

"Well . . . I believe we have gained some interesting information about a misunderstood group. Farnie, we appreciate your time and patience . . . this has been an illuminating experience, and we thank you."

"No trouble at all, Bob! As **you** well know, the best way to learn about something is to ask questions." (Did I detect a tone of sarcasm in his voice?)

As I shoulder my way outward through the crowd of disciples that gathers wherever Mr. Doubleslip speaks, I am left with only one unanswered question in my mind: "I wonder if my son will enjoy the train set I just got him for Christmas as much as I will?"

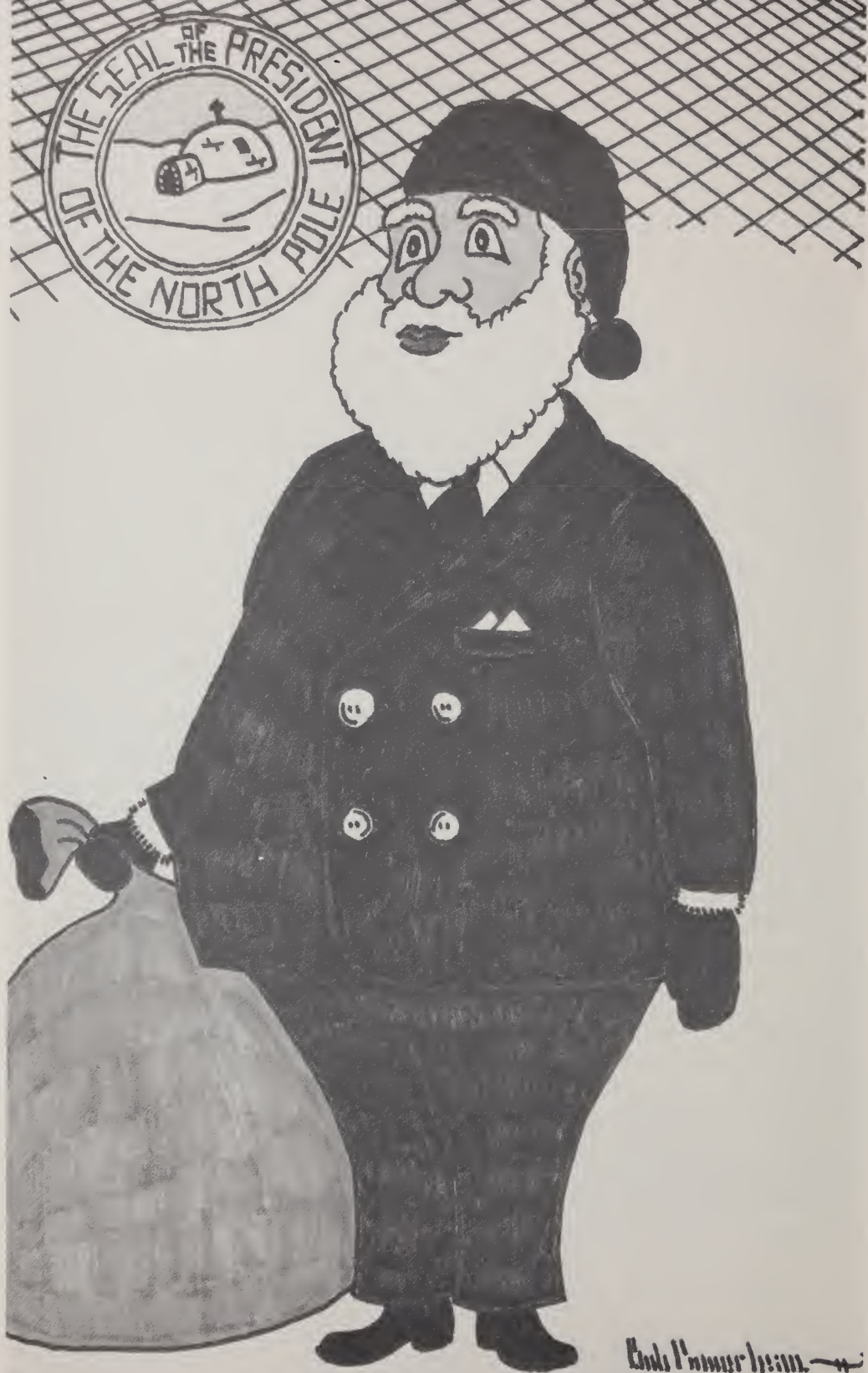
# MOOSE

I had finished my breakfast of bread, cheese, coffee and cigarette before the rest of the crew were even out of their tents. They were awake though. I could tell from the mumbling coming from where they were camped. Not thinking much about it, I began throwing dirty dishes and clothes into my pack. My head was halfway inside my pack when I heard a sharp snap of a branch just to my left. I look up. There, barely twenty yards away, stood a huge bull moose.

We just stood staring at each other. "Wow," I thought, "a moose, a real friggin' moose, look at the size of that critter!" I can't estimate his height, he was huge; long velvet antlers took him even higher. As I picked up my camera, he took a few steps closer. "O shit, he's coming at me." I prepared myself for a mad dash through the trees. "I've got to get a picture." I aimed the lens and shot. He chewed some leaves from a bush and continued watching me. A real cool moose. I wound up and took another shot while I could.

By this time the other members of our crew were up and out of their tents. I started waving my arms and pointing so they could get a look at the big bullwinkle. The moose seemed to know what was going on. He looked over towards the other tents, back at me, turned and nonchalantly walked away.

**By Joe Morin**



Ends Powerbeam. —

## **MY FRIEND**

**by Robert Pomerleau**

I had always admired the suave individual who was able to command the center of conversational attention merely by uttering an amusing anecdote. Now I was the object of such admiration. I never studied this delicate and honorable art. I came by it in a far less burdensome manner.

It was in mid-December, at a party, that I first realized this rare ability. After discarding my cape and top hat, I turned toward the brightly festooned living room. Having exchanged holiday greetings with the host and other acquaintances, I espied a fair young maiden cradling a cup of eggnog close to her chin, as if to hide behind it. Although we had never been introduced, as a confirmed lecher, I had made it a rule to familiarize myself with the names of all the young ladies in this community. Striving to subdue my labored breathing (she was a buxom lass), I approached her.



"Good evening, Miss Bentley. How pleased I am to see you. May I say your presence illuminates the room." I delight in causing innocent girls to blush. "Tell me, have you hung your stocking from the mantelpiece? Santa Claus is coming soon! Did you know that he and I have been close friends for years? Indeed, last fall, I was his Campaign Manager." A sure-fire ice-breaker if ever I heard one!

"It was on my first visit to a model railroad club that I met Henry (after all, no one is born with the title, Santa Claus). We joined the club, and within a few weeks we had become good friends. Our personalities complimented one another. I was a thinker, a planner, and rather serious-minded. **He** was a doer, a story and joke teller without equal, and an incessant cutup. We spent many evenings entertaining the other club members, and any visitors who wandered in, with our antics. I would serve up straight lines to him, and he, like one of the Great Cats, would pounce. Actually, had I now known him so well, I could never have imagined him a predatory feline.

"Henry was quite stout, but there are two kinds of fat men. The vast majority (rotundo Americanus) owe their size as much to inactivity as to overindulgence, and they may be observed enthroned on the front porches of tenements on sweltering summer evenings, newspaper-fans in hand. Members of the second group (hefto Enigmaticus) are only distantly related to the more common variety. They are nimble, athletic, and coordinated beyond their awkward appearance."

"Monsieur Henri, as his close friends called him, obviously belonged to the second group, although his heavily muscled arms were the only outward indications of this. His size 5 shoes were a constant source of amazement to me. It seemed highly improbable that those small feet could balance such a roly-poly body. I am reminded of a small child tethered to an enormous balloon. It is difficult to judge which end of the connection is controlling the movements of the other."

"It was not Henry's physical appearance alone, however, that endeared him to children. His ready smile and hearty laughter were certainly assets, but most importantly, he never spoke down to them."

"Before he reached the qualifying age of fifty, and before his hair and beard made the transition from black to white, he wore the dull-green uniform of a toolmaker. Now, of course, his official wardrobe consists of a half-dozen red suits with matching nightcaps and mittens, and black boots."

"I suppose that having to appear in public attired in such a silly outfit is a small price to pay for such a prestigious office as President of the North Pole. At least **he** is happy, although even in the early days of our friendship, I knew he was a natural for this job. As much as I like Henry, I would never have accepted his offer to act as his Campaign Manager if I had the slightest doubt that he would win the election."

"Oh! I am sorry, Miss Bentley, what was it you were saying?"

## **“WHATSOEVER YOU DO UNTO THE LEAST OF MY BROTHERS”**

**by Natalie P. Stack**

That April Sunday was cold and rainy. The world was a raw and soggy experience. The wind whipped wet leaves in gusts and stuck them where they landed. Brown tree trunks and branches yet un-budded glistened with the drizzle.

Wet misery outside made the comfortable Peugeot more cozy. Warm wet-wool smell and pipe tobacco smoke mingled as we drove home from church. We were laughing and gossiping cozily. I remember our three children argued a bit, good naturedly, about who was to get the firewood from the shed to take the chill in the house away.

As we rounded the last curve before home, I glanced at our house through the slightly steamy windshield and noticed two teenaged boys going up the front walk. Many youngsters came to our house for many reasons, but these were complete strangers. We stopped the car and reluctantly left its warm insulation. The boys were ahead of us on the porch continuing to walk through the open door into the hall and dining room as though there was no turning back. Indeed, there wasn't because we were right behind them and as puzzled as they were drenched.

The older boy had brown wavy hair and was sturdily built. His companion was younger and smaller. He had a pale pinched face with straight blond hair. It was hard to observe them clearly. Water dripped from their hair and eyebrows. Their clothing dripped and water ran down their jacket sleeves onto the floor.

Their desperate condition made questions extraneous, though I did ask if they'd like some toast. The older boy nodded and took the full loaf of bread and jammed some pieces into the toaster. There was no jelly, so I handed him the butter and went into the pantry. They stood there dripping and staring hungrily at the toaster as it warmed and tanned the pieces of precious bread.

It was a strange interlude. No one else spoke. Our children went upstairs to change into everyday clothes, and my husband started a fire in the fireplace. By the time the fire was hot, the whole loaf of bread had been devoured. No questions. No comments from anyone, as though the whole thing had been arranged and everyone knew his part.

The bread was gone, and I was busily getting dinner. The boys gravitated to the heat of the fire in the living room. Soon the furniture was draped with wet jackets and sweaters. The clothing was close to the fire and steamed in the mellow light. Somewhat timidly, our children joined them. Soon the younger people were talking and we could hear fragments of conversation. A pack of cards appeared and between hands of a RUMMY game, a story emerged.

The boys had run away from a foster home in Methuen. They had hitched and hiked to Salisbury the night before. There they crawled into a large metal Salvation Army clothing container for shelter from the rainy night. In the morning, penniless, hungry and thirsty, they'd hiked down our street and decided to take shelter whenever they found an empty house. As luck would have it, our front door had blown open and they had started in to find themselves trapped, as we were right behind them. Their goal was to get to Hampton Beach and live in an abandoned cottage.

Dinner was served and still the main question hung in abeyance. Over warm food we talked of many things. We heard them discuss with honest loathing a couple who took state boys, five at a time, and "boarded" them in inadequate housing. The younger boy explained that they knew a boy who had run away repeatedly until the social worker found him a home where "they don't even beat you." They had decided to try for their freedom.

The meal was coming to an end, and the inevitable question drew closer. The truce which held reality at bay was slipping away. For an afternoon we had shared our home with two human beings who were traumatized wards of the state. Where was our responsibility, to the boys, to ourselves? Tentatively, we offered them options. We offered to return with them to try to soften the punishment. We wanted to try to pressure the social worker for a better home. The air grew tense. They became frightened.



We were divided suddenly. I wanted to see it through, to provide temporary shelter. They refused. The picture of these two in a cold, abandoned beach cottage with no money or means of support was no solution. My husband encouraged their freedom. He could not bring himself to return them to such a home. The boys wanted out - period.

Quietly, I went to a neighbor's home and called the police station. Without identifying myself or giving our address, I discussed the situation with the captain. The picture became legalistic and complicated. These boys were wards of the State, and as such they would eventually be returned anyhow. He agreed that the social worker should try to find another home, etc., etc., etc. The reality was that if they kept on, they would be back at the starting line with a police record. I agreed to let him send an unmarked car with the youth officer. Like Judas, whose sandals are heavy indeed, I walked home, wondering what I would say to them, to their fear. What would I say to my family?

They were gone. They'd suspected my absence. My husband told them the truth and let them go. We were all relieved. We were relieved but guilty that no better solution had been found. The youth officer was angry when he arrived and left abruptly. A short while later he rang the bell and told us that he'd found the boys in the act of stealing a bicycle. They were now under arrest. He spoke angrily, as though it had all been our fault.

It was quiet after he left. What is there to say to the harsh reality of a society that wounds its own young? The whole afternoon took on an air of unreality and we were left with weary frustration and emptiness.

The telephone rang. Perhaps it was a friend with a welcome diversion? It was the police Sargent. The boys wanted to see us. Would we come down to the station? I think we both felt the surge of adrenalin. Here was another chance. Perhaps some relief from our oppressive sense of guilt. Perhaps some chance at reconciliation, some way to help. We hurried downtown.

I'd never been in our police station, let alone in the only cell. They both sat on the cot under the dim light of the mesh-covered electric light. The filthy toilet with its crazy-quilt pattern of cracked porcelain was the only other furniture.

The officer spoke gruffly and ordered them to tell us what was so "damned important." He warned us not to get too close to the cell and he left. They sat and stared; they said nothing. What is there to say when your chief offense is being?

Timidly we tried. Why had they called? What was the answer? What was the real question? They sat and stared, and said nothing, as though the sight of us had paralyzed their throats. Suddenly I felt that what they had really wanted was for us to see them there. That's all. They wanted us to see and know their reality, their pain, and their hatred.

As we left, solid, substantial, guilty-as-hell citizens, the officer spoke: "Nice of you to come out, folks. These damned kids don't know what the hell they want."



# OF ONCE FUTURE KINGS

STORY: PAUL SANBORN ART: Phi/Royce

## OF ONCE AND FUTURE KINGS

### PART ONE

by Paul Sanborn

Over the wind swept sward he ran, the smell of the sea in his nostrils and the cold lurking fear that he might die soon.

He hadn't seen the small party of men following him for days, but his animal instinct told him that they would soon be upon him. All was silent, except the low howl of the wind.

Gulls flew in a soundless motion above him . . .

The wind stilled suddenly, the silence was now total, it was as though the dread spectre of silence loomed in the sea air . . . scarping his mind like chalk on a cold piece of slate. Sweat poured from his long black mane of hair and scarred face, his body shivered from what seemed to be the breeze from the sea near by, but there was no seabreeze.

He stopped in his tracks, and stood still for a moment, and then started to run over what looked to be a small hill. Reaching the top, he stood staring out to the sea while he caught his breath.

"By the Gods!" He said with grit teeth. "What do you see before you?"

He paused for a moment, pearly glass eyes glaring out to the ever changing sea.

"Damn! Damn those stinking dogs! They should be happy I killed their sewer pig of a king!!"

Then for no earthly reason, a foggy haze clouded his eyes, and a dizzy feeling filled his mind. For a moment he thought death was near, but no. Not this soon. No, not this soon.

He sighed and tried to clear the drunkard feeling from his body.

The sky darkened, clouds swirled wildly, the horizon danced with unearthly colors that sparkled and flamed like a mad fire from the pits of hell. Winds tore violently at the waters below him, the sea was in full fury; waves dashed against the barren rocks at the bottom of the cliff he stood upon, the roar of the fierce waters echoed throughout his bones, and the biting taste of salt water in his mouth as the burning salt water splashed into his eyes.

The madness of the sea was that of Satan.

He turned from the mad sea, covering his face with his hands.

"Barbarian! Ho! Barbarian!" For a moment he thought it to be the mad voice of the storm. "Barbarian! Ho!! . . . Barbarian!"

This time the words came clear, . . . he swirled, unsheathed his sword with the speed and skill of a warrior born, and pointed the gleaming battle-worn blade to the heart of a strangely clothed man that stood more than ten feet tall.

"Tell me who you are, or I'll gut you and leave you for the wolves . . ."

"You'll do no such thing, small man. Who are you?"

A strange fear grew within the barbarian's heart, he could not understand it at first, but then he knew. Frozen in his place, in a dream-like world the tall man spoke the very words that he had muttered in his blind rage earlier.

"By the Gods!" He said with grit teeth. "What do you see before you?"

"I see the rolling seas, and a far horizon, and memories of a long forgotten and fragmented past. I am what I am, I can be no more."

"But who are you, man!"

"I am a northlander!"

"I seek to know you! Why do you not tell me?"

"I am . . ."

"Of once and future kings." The tall man paused for a minute, his eyes burning into the barbarian's very soul. "Barbarian, look upon this, the future! This . . . the future of mankind."

Images appeared, flowing like thick water and then shattering like broken glass to fall into dust, melting away into a limbo to be lost from his sight. Everything was happening so fast, yet the images moved slowly, time was being played before him. He watched great armies battling, sword to sword, gun to gun, one planet to another, galactic wars destroying thousands of races, stars melting before great rays, even universes . . . dying before his gaze. Somewhere in all the fantastic sights he looked upon, there was one . . . he remembered well.



He stood above the bloodied corpse, and on the dead man's head was a golden crown with fire stones ever so finely placed around its rim. In the image he saw, he dropped his blood-stained sword beside the corpse and taking the crown from the body, he placed it upon his own brow.

The realization and shock washed over him like a wave of icy seawater in the dead of winter. He stood there . . . for what seemed hours . . . just staring out at the sea. The barbarian paused a minute and looked about trying to find the tall man; there was no sign of him.

Moments later he fell into the soft blackness of slumber.

He awoke to the pounding of horses' hooves on the swardy ground and quickly jumped to his feet. As far as he could tell, everything was as it was before his dread nightmare. He unsheathed his broadsword and made ready for the riders that approached him over the far hill.

Then to the barbarian's surprise, the party of men stopped about a thousand feet in front of him.

"Dog of the north this is the day you shall die and wither in the pits of some loathsome hell! Mark my words, dog!"

"HA! You try to slay me with your looks, pigface?" Come closer and I'll feed your heart to the vultures!"

The man on the lead horse lifted his hands to the sky, holding an object that shined as a jewel would . . . the barbarian could not see the object he held in his hands plainly. He uttered a few words that the barbarian could not make out, and then threw the object onto the sward; it bounced once and then blew up into a cloud of billowing scarlet smoke. A figure, the shape of a man, but much larger was forming in the mists. He clenched his sword tighter and readied to leap like a tiger at bay at the unknown foe within the now dissipating mists.

The creature stepped forth from the cover of the mists, and hissed in a deep soulless voice at the lone barbarian. He did not wait for the creature to attack; he sprang forward and cut a deep slash across the creature's rock-like stomach. The creature momentarily grasped its wound, and at that instant, the barbarian raised his blade and cleaved the creature from skull to shoulder bone with one blow. The creature fell dead to the ground.

In a wild enraged frenzy he leaped toward the man on the closest horse, and grabbed the horse's mane, pulling himself up close enough to swing his blade around to cut off the man's head. Another man tried to cut the barbarian down with his sword, but he was taken out by a sword slice to the side before he knew what was happening.

The barbarian stood over two corpses as the remaining men rode off, knowing better not to enrage a tiger that has already killed this day.

"Why do you run, spineless dogs!" Does the color of red scare you, or is it that you prefer yellow!" His laugh echoed over the cliffs and across the small rolling hills.

The barbarian walked on after cleaning his sword on one of the deadmen's clothes. He would make his own destiny, even if it was to be a king one day.



THE  
Gilla



## WATCHFUL MOON

by Robert J. Ramey

Verno heard the screams and stopped walking. Something closed and tightened about his heart. He stood perfectly still, waiting, sure that the end had come and he had lost. The screams grew louder, like angry claws raking across his eardrums. He forced himself to look up. "Damn!"

He sighed. Two crows. Two crows were fighting on the top of a telephone pole. What else could it have been? He wiped the cold perspiration from his face.

"Why should I be afraid?" he said.

"Barto should be the one who ought to be worried. If the fool only knew."

The episode with the crows had no symbolism. In all his years, which had been about 400, he had never believed in symbolism. He had brought corpses back to life, turned scrap metal into gold, and visited the moon; nevertheless, Verno was a skeptic at heart. What he did not understand - and he understood a great deal more than others - he did not believe. Symbolism to him was nonsense, and psychiatry was worse which compounded Barto's insult.

As he walked down the street, Verno recalled the monstrous conversation with Barto and it made his blood run hot. He could hear Barto's soft, mocking voice.

"Really, Verno, you ought to see a good psychiatrist. I'm serious. This persecution complex is beginning to worry me."

"It isn't a complex, it is a fact and the fact is I am being persecuted by you."

"Oh, be serious Verno. Why should I want to persecute you? I have everything I want and so, for that matter, do you. Riches, comfort, eternal life. What could I possibly gain?"

With that thought in mind, Verno reached his destination. "Jack Bryant, Private Eye," the sign read. He opened the door and a tall, skinny, man was sitting behind a desk in a haze of smoke.

"Do you serve notices?" Verno asked.

"Yes, I do," Bryant said.

"I heard you are the best Private Eye in town. Will you work for me?"

"I work for anybody, anytime," Bryant replied.

"There is only one catch, Bryant. This notice must be served by midnight, tonight."

He placed five one-hundred dollar bills on his desk.

"Can you do it?" he asked.

Bryant put the money in his pocket and said, "Let me have the papers."

Verno looked at the markings on the paper and handed it over to Bryant.

"He'll be home and I'll wait for you here."

Bryant nodded and went out.

Verno leaned back in his chair. He prayed to the Demons of the Outer Circle, then to those of the Inner Circle, and finally to each of the Black Powers. He walked to the window and opened it and stared at the moon. It was low and close, like a giant eye.

Five hours passed; Verno was perspiring in a chain of bundled nerves. Finally, the door opened.

"Well!" croaked Verno. "Did you find him?"

"I thought you said it was going to be difficult. It was a cinch!"

Verno chuckled to himself, as he imagined using a process server to cast an ancient rune on a fellow Black Wizard. What could be a grander joke?

He glanced at the moon, which seemed lower and closer. He stared at the door.

"Just a minute," Bryant said, "you forgot your receipt for the five bills."

"Oh, I forgot."

Just as he reached for the door, his heart froze and he went into a fit of convulsions. He tore the envelope apart.

"I told you I'd work for anyone, anytime," Bryant remarked coldly.

It seems Barto had cast a rune also! Outside, the moon winked.







